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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004529

SIPDIS

ALSO FOR MNF-I AND MNF-I NORTH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKS SEEK URGENT COOPERATION ON SECURITY MEASURES  
FOR TURKISH TRUCKERS IN IRAQ

REF: A. ANKARA 4340

[1](#)B. ISTANBUL 1249

Classified By: DCM Robert S. Deutsch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see para. four.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Bilateral Political Affairs Baki Ilkin called in DCM Aug. 11 to discuss the security situation for Turkish truckers in Iraq. The GOT has been dealing with the murder and kidnapping of a number of Turkish workers--primarily truckers--in Iraq in recent weeks, most spectacularly the murder on the Internet of Murat Yuce on Aug. 2 (ref a). Ilkin said that the GOT is facing a dilemma: it wants the flow of goods into Iraq to continue, but also must demonstrate to the major Turkish trucking associations and to ordinary Turkish truckers and the general public that it is taking genuine steps to improve the truckers' security. Ilkin repeated the GOT's commitment to keep goods flowing to its southern neighbor, both for Turkey's economic interests and to supply goods needed to promote stability in Iraq.

[1](#)3. (C) Ilkin presented DCM with a non-paper (text in para. five) of preliminary Turkish thinking on possible steps to improve security for truckers. He said that this issue has been moved to the top of the GOT agenda for the Aug. 16-17 visit of Iraqi President al-Yawar, and clearly required trilateral cooperation. He recommended that points of contact be established in both Ankara (U.S. Embassy and MFA) and Baghdad (IIG, Turkish and U.S. Embassies) to establish a dialogue on trucker security and to discuss both the ideas in the Turkish paper and any other ideas we might be able to bring to the table. Ilkin emphasized the need for "us to work together seriously, effectively, and quickly," and repeated that the GOT was "in a very difficult position" on this issue. Ilkin offered MFA Deputy DG for Bilateral Economic Affairs Sakir Fakili as MFA's Ankara POC, and asked that we be prepared to meet with him as early as Aug. 13 so that the Turks would be able to offer a preliminary report to Iraqi President al-Yawar's delegation during his Aug. 16-17 visit to Ankara. DCM responded that it is in all of our interests for Turkish drivers and businesspeople to be able to work in Iraq, and that we will work with Washington and Embassy Baghdad to see what steps are possible. (Comment: We note that the GOT has thus far taken the correct path on this issue: it has been careful not to be drawn into the public (especially the press's) hand-wringing about the plight of Turkish truckers in Iraq, and several ministers have pointed to the importance of continuing to trade with Iraq. End comment.)

[1](#)4. (C) Action request: We would like to be able to give a preliminary response to the Turks' paper by Aug. 13 and request guidance by COB Aug. 12. We recognize that some of the Turkish ideas may not be realistic, but some may be feasible. Request also that Washington and Embassy Baghdad consider the Turks' idea that we establish POC's for a dialogue in Baghdad, or Mosul if that is more appropriate. We request reactions that we may share to this proposal as well. Additionally, we ask the Department to respond to ref a action request to inform us of what procedures MNF-I employs in protecting convoys of trucks crossing the Habur Gate carrying coalition and humanitarian supplies.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Begin text of non-paper:

Turkey serves as a major supply route to Iraq, particularly for reconstruction efforts as well as humanitarian assistance and procurement for Coalition Forces. The Turkish Government is fully convinced that economic recovery of Iraq is essential for peace and stability in the region and Turkey does its utmost in this regard. The Turkish Government is of the view that there is no option other than the success of the ongoing efforts.

The recent incidents in Iraq, however, have put the security of the Turkish drivers and their lorries at grave risk, also jeopardizing the supply line. The Turkish Government will take up all these issues with President Ghazi al-Yawar and his delegation when they visit Ankara next week. Yet, in the light of the prevailing situation in Iraq, the Turkish Government needs the full assistance and cooperation of the

US authorities for the following:

- Assistance for providing safe accommodations for truck drivers;

- Reinforcement of escort and security services provided by US forces to Turkish drivers and trucks;

- Provision of US assistance for the "RODER" and "UND" (Embassy Note: Turkey's two major trucking associations. End note.) experts for their field studies in Iraq which will be conducted with the purpose of searching for safe warehouse, transfer center and truck park facilities;

- In this context, utilization and expansion of the World Food Program warehouse and the truck park at Mosul in accordance with the requirements of the Turkish transportation companies;

- Lifting the escort discrimination applied to Turkish trucks with loads other than primary US requirements (kerosene, etc.) and providing appropriate reconnaissance and escort to all;

- Developing a network of mobile telecommunications facility designed to assist the truck drivers in times of need and danger;

- Convening of periodical meetings between the relevant parties on the aforementioned issues (namely security and escort, refurbishment and establishment of truck transfer centers);

- Arrangement of meetings between US officials and representatives of the Turkish private sector companies operating in Iraq;

- Establishment and consolidation of an insurance policy scheme for transporters (proper documentation of damages or losses, lowering or premiums);

The Turkish Government would highly appreciate an early response for the aforementioned arrangements.

10 August 2004

END TEXT

16. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
EDELMAN